

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9569
INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PE
SUBJECT: STRIKE UPDATE

REF: LIMA 3062

SUMMARY: STRIKE CONTINUES THROUGH 8TH DAY IN AREQUIPA WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROACTICALLY HALTED AND INCREASING NUMBERS OF BUSINESSES CLOSED. THE STRIKE AT ILO (BEGUN MARCH 27) ALSO REMAINS UNRESOLVED. CHIMBOTE AND THE STATE-OWNED MINING COMPLEX CERRO DE PASCO ARE QUIET FOR THE MOMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS PRACTICALLY NONEXISTENT IN AREQUIPA AND INCREASING NUMBERS OF BUSINESSES ARE SHUT DOWN OR OPERATING ONLY PART TIME. AT THE INITIATIVE OF AREQUIPA'S ARCHBISHOP BALLON, STRIKE LEADERS MET WITH GEN. SCHROTH (CG OF PERU'S THIRD MILITARY REGION), THE PREFECT OF AREQUIPA, CLERGYMEN AND LOCAL BUSINESSMEN APRIL 10 TO SEEK A SOLUTION TO THE GENERAL STRIKE. REPORTEDLY THE MEETING ENDED ABRUPTLY WITH THE WALKOUT OF MOST PARTICIPANTS. DESPITE
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THE ARCHBISHOP'S CONTINUING EFFORTS, NO RPT NO FURTHER PROGRESS IN RESOLVING THE STRIKE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MADE.

2. A SOLUTION TO THE MARCH 27 STRIKE AT ILO APPEARS EQUALLY REMOTE. ILO LABOR LEADERS MET WITH OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRIES OF LABOR AND INTERIOR IN LIMA APRIL 11 AS WELL AS WITH OFFICIALS OF SOUTHERN PERU COPPER CORP (SPCC). SPCC

OFFICIALS REPORT THAT THE WORKERS HAVE ADOPTED AN "ALL OR NOTHING" ATTITUDE AND INSIST ON SPCC'S REHIRING ALL WORKERS FIRED LAST YEAR FOR STRIKE ACTIVITIES. AFTER THE UNSUCCESSFUL MEETINGS WITH STRIKE LEADERS IN LIMA, THE GOP DECLARED A STATE OF EMERGENCY IN THE PROVINCE OF ILO, SUSPENDED CONSTITUTIONAL DECREES THERE AND CRITICIZED THE THREE MAJOR ILO UNIONS (SPCC EMPLOYEES, SPCC WORKERS, AND THE METAL-WORKERS UNION) FOR THE SERIOUS DAMAGE THEY WERE CAUSING PERU'S ECONOMY. (SPCC OFFICIALS RATE LOSSES FROM THE STRIKE AT ABOUT DOLS 800,000 PER DAY).

3. STRIKERS IN AREQUIPA ARE STILL TRYING TO SECURE COOPERATION FROM RAILROAD WORKERS BUT TRAINS CONTINUE TO OPERATE WITH SOME DELAYS. AREQUIPA FEDERATION OF WORKERS ALSO HOPES TO ENLIST SUPPORT FOR THEIR PROTEST FROM THE TOWNS OF JULIACA AND CUZCO BUT EMBASSY HAS NO RPT NO CONFIRMATION OF STRIKE SPREADING TO THESE CENTERS.

4. THE SITUATION AT CHIMBOTE, WHERE TROUBLE WAS EXPECTED OVER THE FIRING OF 1150 WORKERS AT THE BOATBUILDING AND REPAIR COMPANY PICSA, REPORTEDLY WAS NORMAL APRIL 11. THE STRIKE AT THE GOP CERRO DE PASCO MINING COMPLEX HAS BEEN RESOLVED, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT COMPANIES IN THE LIMA/CALLAO AREA HAVE REFUSED TO TAKE BACK 78 HUNGER STRIKERS DESPITE THE GOP MARCH 19 DECREE ORDERING THEIR REHIRING (LIMA 2414).

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5. COMMENT: AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, PERU'S LABOR DISTURBANCES APPEAR LIMITED TO THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE HAS BEEN LIMITED (LIMA 3062). HOWEVER, THE ILO SPCC STRIKE IS AN INCREASING EMBARRASSMENT AND REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT FOREIGN EXHCNAGE LOSS FOR THE GOP.

6. DEPARTMENT AND INFO ADDRESSEES SHOULD CONTINUE TO ADVISE PROSPECTIVE TRAVELERS TO PERU OF DIFFICULT TRANSPORT, BANK AND SHOPPING SITUATION IN AREQUIPA WHICH IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE AT LEAST FOR THE REST OF THIS WEEK.

DECON 4/12/79.

SHLAUDEMAM

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